

# Making a Difference

## Remembering Caroline Widmer

By Libby Eason, Rolfing® Instructor, Rolf Movement® Practitioner



Libby Eason

**ABSTRACT** *This article is the author's remembrance of Caroline Widmer, a first-generation Rolfer as well as psychotherapist who pioneered Rolfing® Structural Integration (SI) in Atlanta while also participating on the Rolfing faculty.*

In August 2019 we lost another of our first generation of Rolfers, Caroline Widmer, PhD. It was Caroline who brought Rolfing SI to Atlanta in 1968. Already a therapist, she had met Dr. Rolf in 1967 while taking a course in Gestalt therapy with Fritz Perls at Esalen Institute. Rolf invited her to take the Rolfing training, which she did, graduating in 1968. She went on to assist classes taught by Rolf and also was a faculty member at the Rolf Institute®.

Caroline was born in 1937 and became Dr. Widmer in 1975 when she graduated from Georgia State University with a doctorate in psychology. Besides Rolfing work, she was in practice as a therapist, and used that knowledge and experience to be a more dimensional Rolfer. Caroline helped countless clients and patients

over the span of her career from 1968 until 2010, including multiple generations of families.

One of the stories Caroline told was about how Rolf spoke about her work. One year, she would tell her students to always do something a certain way. When she came back the next year, she would tell them to never do it that way, but showed them another way. This taught me to be adaptable in my approach to the work, which has served my own inquiry into Rolfing SI and its applications.

Caroline also had a way of addressing the more superficial fascia that was very effective, and felt wonderful to the receiver. It was the most superficial contact, using the finger pads, scrolling up an arm or leg. There was a resonance with deeper layers,



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while the contact remained more surface. I've learned this technique from her, among others. We were able to trade sessions for a number of years, with continuous exchange of ideas along with the work that continue to enrich my practice.

Another story: Rolf told Caroline that she was one of a very few people who needed to receive forty to fifty sessions before she could give her the Ten Series. This provides an insight into how Rolf thought about her work. Caroline grew up with a father who broke and trained horses in Colorado, so she was accustomed from an early age to taking part in the process, and hauling fifty-pound sacks of feed. She came into adult life with a tremendous collection of density, injuries, and - on the bright side - determination. That helped her to find the healing she needed with Rolf, and the practice that enriched the lives of so many others over her years of practice.

Caroline had an insatiable desire to learn as much as possible about complementary and alternative healing as well as spiritual matters. She was a member of MENSA. She was one of the first trainers for the est training started by Werner Erhard. She spent time with Rolf and other Rolfers at Brugh Joy's ranch

in the 1970s, she was a close associate of Dr. Byron Gentry (the metaphysically oriented chiropractor with whom Rolf consulted frequently), and she became a Reiki master.

One of Caroline's projects was to tell as many people as possible, "You make a difference!" She had buttons made with that saying, thousands of them. She gave them away, and sold them, at cost, to schools, teachers, civic groups, and others. One of her fondest wishes was to make sure as many people as possible received that message. In *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, there is a story about a teenage boy going through a stressful time and on the verge of committing suicide. His busy father received the button at work that day, and coming home he gave it to his son. Through that they found a way to a meaningful connection and a life was saved. This was the kind of message that inspired Caroline, and that she used to inspire others.

As Caroline became aware of her declining health, her main concern was that she wasn't able to be of service and 'make a difference'. In her honor, please carry that mission forward.

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